

News release

2009-10 EDITION OF *FREELANCE READY RECKONER* PUBLISHED

The *Freelance Ready Reckoner*, now in its fourth year of issue, calculates as accurately as possible the full employer cost of employing staff journalists and uses these figures to identify comparable freelance day rates.

The *Freelance Ready Reckoner* is published by freelance financial journalist Andrew Bibby, using a range of specialist employment and trade sources. It is available for free download from www.andrewbibby.com.

Some key facts in this year's report:

- **Freelance journalists should invoice media clients £285 for a day's work to achieve comparability with a staff journalist earning £25,000**
- **For comparability with a staffer earning £40,000, a day's freelance earnings should be £425**
- **The real cost to an employer of an employee earning £30,000 is £44,794**
- **2009-10 figures show a slight decline on previous years, attributable primarily to lower property costs**

Freelance journalists should invoice their clients in the media £285 for a day's work to achieve comparability with a staff journalist on £25,000 a year. And for comparability with an employee earning £40,000, a day's freelance earnings should be £425.

These are among the findings from the fourth edition of the **Freelance Ready Reckoner**, produced by freelance financial journalist Andrew Bibby. This year's edition shows a small decline in employment costs, and therefore in recommended freelance rates, compared with previous years.

The Ready Reckoner provides, in tabular form, day rates for freelancers working from their own premises, comparable to annual gross salaries in the range £20,000-£60,000. Although designed for journalists, the Ready Reckoner can also be adapted for use by other freelance and self-employed workers.

The pay comparison table uses a range of publicly available data to calculate the real cost to employers of employing staff. The add-on costs include such things as employers' NI contribution, employers' liability insurance, the cost of recruitment, typical staff training costs and typical staff sickness costs. Also included is the cost of providing office accommodation, including heating, lighting, cleaning, furniture and equipment. An assumption is made that employers make a modest contribution towards employees' pensions.

Andrew Bibby says: "The Ready Reckoner provides an easy way to compare freelance rates with staff salary levels. Both commissioning editors and freelancers can sometimes fail to realise what constitutes a fair day's remuneration for a freelance."

The Ready Reckoner draws on a range of business information in order to identify as closely as possible the average costs of employing staff in the media industry. For example, data for staff recruitment, training and sickness costs are

derived from the recently published 2009 editions of national surveys published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Where the CIPD provides breakdowns by industrial sector, data for the media sector have been used.

This year's Ready Reckoner shows a slight decline in the cost of employing journalists, primarily attributable to falling office property costs but also to employer reductions in staff training budgets and to an apparent reduction in absenteeism when compared with previous years. These reductions are offset by recent rises in the employer national insurance contributions levels. The total cost of employing a staff journalist on £25,000 is now £38,801 (2007-8: £39,224). Freelance day rates have been adjusted accordingly.

Andrew Bibby adds: "Most employers are aware that the 'on' costs of employing staff can be substantial. The Ready Reckoner offers the only readily available single source of information about the size of these costs. In a number of areas the Ready Reckoner errs on the side of caution, so these figures may be underestimates.

The Ready Reckoner is based on the assumption that staff have 25 days' paid leave, or in other words work a total of 228 days a year.

Andrew Bibby is a long-established freelance journalist, whose work regularly appears in the UK national press. He also undertakes work for a range of international organisations, including the UN agency the International Labour Organisation. His decision to produce the Freelance Ready Reckoner followed work he undertook looking at the position of freelance and 'atypical' workers in the European Union.

The 2009-10 Ready Reckoner is available for downloading from Andrew Bibby's website, www.andrewbibby.com.

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Editors' note

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